goods and services, and various non-tangible benefits that accrue from our forests. As regards investment into the forestry sector, 0.94 percent of the total public sector outlay has been allocated to this sector during the Eighth Five Year Plan.

(b) There is no international standard for forest cover. The National Forest Policy of India has stipulated that a minimum of one third of the total land area of the country should be under forest or tree cover.

(c) The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 as amended in 1988 in addition to the Indian Forest Act 1927, and a number of State Forest Acts are enforced to ensure strict control over diversion or loss of forest coverage in the country. Government has also taken a number of steps to increase the forest cover in the country. These include improved protection measures, conservation and development of forests, rehabilitation of degraded forests, afforestration scheme social forestry schemes, participatory forest managements etc.

(d) Andaman and Nicobar Islands have the highest percentage (92.4%) of forest cover followed by Tripura (89.4%). Haryana has got the lowest percentage (1.2%) of forest cover among the states. The Union Territories of Lakshadweep and Pondichery have no forest cover. Pondichery have not legally classified forest area. Haryana which entirely falls in the Indo-Gangetic belt has had less forest area because of agricultural activities being considered more suitable in the past. Social Forestry activities have now been given high priority in the State.

Measures to reduce Pollution

2266. SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the survey conducted by "Rajiv Gandhi Foundation" under 'Environmental Literacy Drive' found about 63 zones affected by radiation hazards; and

(b) if so, what measures Government are taking to reduce pollution in these zones?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) A report alleging that radiation hazard is on the rise in Lucknow has been published in a section of the press. This report is based on a press release issued by Environment Research Laboratory, which is implementing the project on Environmental Literacy funded by Rajiv Gandhi Foundation. This has, however, been contradicted by the surveys conducted by scientists of Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) and Bhabha Atomic Research Centre. These surveys indicate that radiation levels in Lucknow are in the range normally found in these areas and are due to the natural background radiation. AERB scientists have demonstrated that the apparent high levels of radiation reported by Environmental Research Laboratory are due to the deficiencies of the radiation measurement instruments and not due to any actual presence of extraneous radiation.

(b) Does not arise.

Ban on mining in the country

2267. SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) which are the areas in our country where Government have banned mining activity;

(b) whether an assessment of the damage done to the environment ecology and wildlife by such mining activity has been made;

(c) what steps are being taken to implement the ban effectively; and